

# Our Missouri Waters



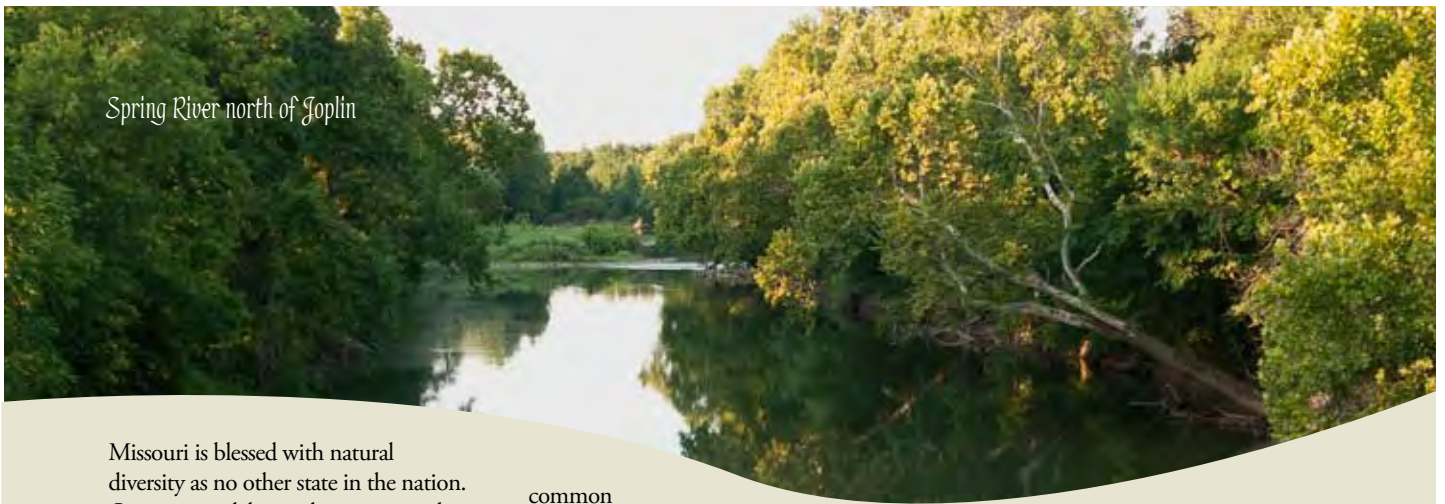
**MISSOURI**  
DEPARTMENT OF  
NATURAL RESOURCES

PUB2472

Big River



Spring River north of Joplin



Missouri is blessed with natural diversity as no other state in the nation. Our streams, lakes and rivers are as diverse as the varied landscapes they flow through and are important to the quality of life in Missouri. They play an essential role in the overall health and well-being of each Missourian and the economy of our state.

We have made significant improvements to our state's water quality. To continue this progress, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources has begun an initiative that will improve the way we protect and preserve our watersheds. We call this innovative approach to watershed management -- *Our Missouri Waters*. Water, like all natural resources, belongs to everyone. Clean and abundant water is important to all of us and each of us needs to help to make this effort successful.

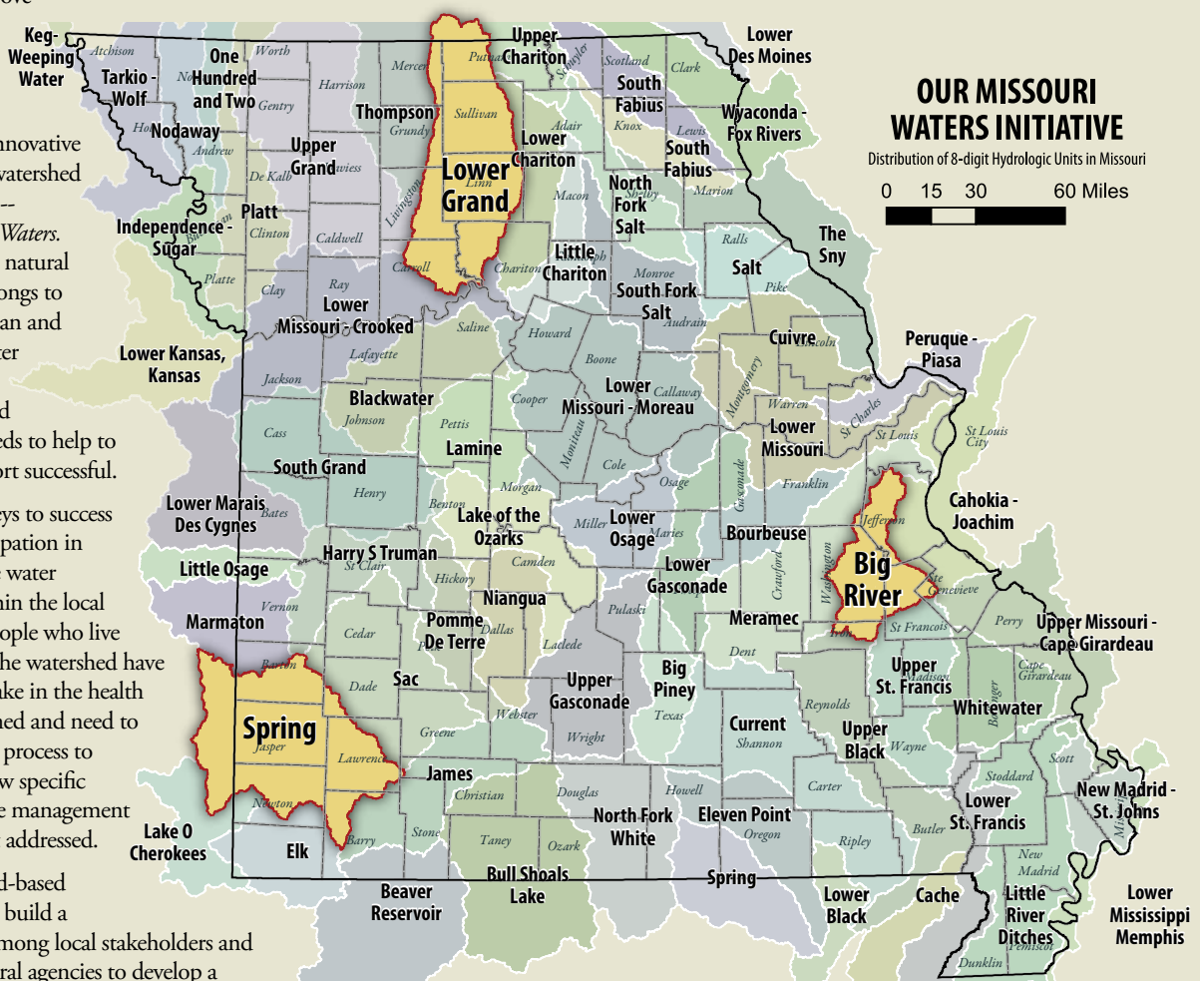
One of the keys to success is local participation in managing the water resources within the local watershed. People who live and work in the watershed have the biggest stake in the health of the watershed and need to be part of the process to determine how specific water resource management needs are best addressed.

The watershed-based approach will build a partnership among local stakeholders and state and federal agencies to develop a

common understanding of the health and challenges of the watershed, identify priorities and then work together to address common goals. Because this approach will be tailored to the watershed and the local stakeholders, each watershed will have a unique set of challenges to manage, a distinct group of stakeholders and opportunities specific to each watershed. By coordinating the efforts of all the agencies and individuals who have an interest

in the watershed, we will be able to focus available resources and funding to address the priorities in the watershed.

The goal of *Our Missouri Waters* is quite simple -- we want to build partnerships that include the people who live and work in the watershed to plan together and work together to benefit the watershed.



## Missouri's Watersheds

The Department of Natural Resources selected three watersheds to focus on in the first phase of the Our Missouri Waters initiative. The department evaluated all 66 watersheds throughout the state and selected the Spring River, Big River and the Lower Grand River watersheds, due to the diversity and opportunities within these watersheds. When selecting the watersheds, the department examined concerns such as water quality, water quantity, high-quality waters for preservation and local stakeholder interest.

For more information about these watersheds, visit the department's website at [dnr.mo.gov/omwi.htm](http://dnr.mo.gov/omwi.htm). You may also "Like Us" on Facebook at Our Missouri Waters Lower Grand River Watershed Initiative, Our Missouri Waters Spring River Watershed Initiative or Our Missouri Waters Big River Watershed Initiative.



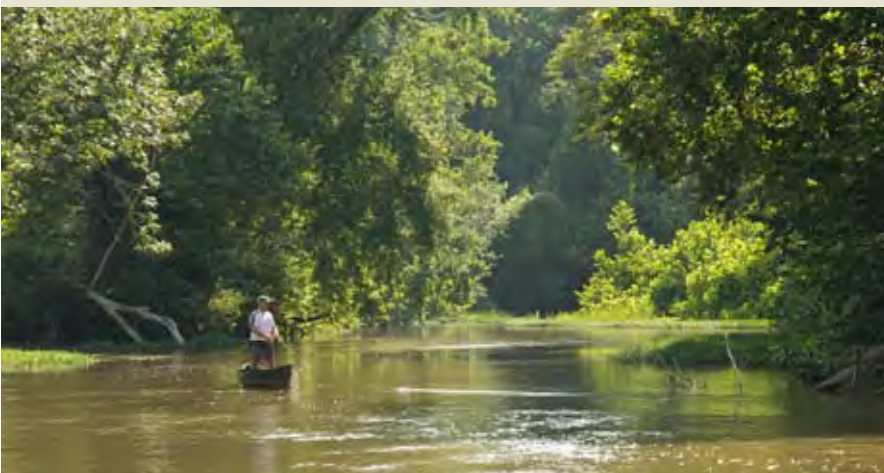
### Spring River Watershed

The Spring River Watershed is a critical inter-state watershed in southwest Missouri. Missouri shares this drainage basin with Kansas and Oklahoma, and it eventually discharges into Grand Lake O' the Cherokees, which represents a highly important recreational resource. The Spring River watershed has some excellent water quality, but also has water quality impairments related to historical mining and agricultural runoff.



### Lower Grand River Watershed

The Lower Grand River Watershed in north-central Missouri is in an area of the state with water quantity problems, where drought conditions can threaten the drinking water supply for many communities. This watershed contains areas of diverse wet prairie and bottomland forest that are remnants of the natural wetland habitat once common in northern Missouri. The watershed also contains streams impacted by channelization, sedimentation, and nonpoint source runoff.



### Big River Watershed

The Big River Watershed is located in east-central Missouri and discharges into the Meramec River basin. The Big River has severe biological impairment due to nonpoint source pollution resulting from mining activities in the watershed.



## What is a watershed?

A watershed is an area of land that drains water into a particular lake, river or wetland. A group of watersheds that drain into a major water body is often referred to as a basin. For instance, all of the land that drains water into the Missouri River from Three Forks, Montana, to St. Louis, Missouri, is referred to as the Missouri River Basin. Watersheds can be divided into smaller watersheds such as an area surrounding a specific small creek or stream.

## What are the benefits of a healthy watershed?

Healthy watersheds provide sufficient amounts of clean water required for safe drinking water, aquatic life and wildlife, recreation, irrigation and industrial processes. The condition of a watershed directly affects the quality and quantity of water in a lake, river, stream or wetland. Healthy watersheds provide economic benefits such as reducing costs for supplying and treating water for the public and industrial uses, recreational opportunities and flood control.



*Grand Falls on Shoal Creek in Joplin*

## How can I protect my watershed?

To help protect Missouri's water resources, the department issues permits and inspects regulated facilities and inspects those business and other potential sources of pollution at facilities throughout the state. You can help protect your watershed by getting to know your watershed. By becoming familiar with the activities in your watershed, you can better understand water resource opportunities that need specific attention.

- Attend public meetings or hearings that address water resource problems.
- Join a volunteer water quality monitoring team. Visit the Stream Team website at [mostreamteam.org](http://mostreamteam.org).
- Vote to support bond issues to raise money to build or upgrade your local wastewater treatment plants. Facilities that are overloaded or malfunctioning can discharge bacteria and other pollutants into nearby waters.





### *Implement best management practices where possible:*

- Plant a buffer zone of vegetation along a stream on your property to slow down stormwater runoff and allow it to soak into the ground before it reaches the stream. Avoid farming or building right next to the edge of a stream.
- Limit your use of lawn fertilizers and pesticides or investigate alternatives.
- Plant native species on your property to enhance beauty, create habitat for wildlife and reduce the need for water, fertilizers and pesticides.
- Keep your automobile maintained to reduce the amount of oil, grease and other lubricants leaking onto roads and driveways.
- Dispose of used oil and household chemicals properly. Do not dump oil or hazardous chemicals onto the ground.
- Keep your septic tank properly maintained by having it pumped every 2 to 3 years.
- Do not flush medicines down the toilet. These pharmaceuticals can enter downstream waters. Properly dispose of your expired or unused pharmaceuticals at area drop-off events.
- Incorporate erosion control measures such as silt fences around construction sites.
- Install best management practices on your farm that are designed to reduce soil erosion and runoff of fertilizers and pesticides from your property. Maintain filter strips on the edges of your fields, plant cover crops, conduct soil tests, and mix your chemicals away from wells. Ask your county extension agent about rotational grazing, a practice that prevents erosion and unnecessary reseeding, provides cleaner water for livestock and protects nearby streams and creeks.
- Do not dump anything down a storm drain. Storm drains can discharge directly to a local stream or lake.
- Cover exposed soil in your garden or landscaped areas with mulch or hay to prevent soil erosion.
- Construct a rain garden in your yard.
- Support developers who include rain gardens, stormwater retention basins and green space in their development plans.

### *Financial Assistance Opportunities*

The Department of Natural Resources offers numerous opportunities for financial assistance including tax credits and exemptions, loans and grants. These opportunities are available for private individuals, communities, organizations and companies. For additional information about the department's financial assistance opportunities, visit the department's website at [dnr.mo.gov/pubs/financial-assistance-brochure-2011.pdf](http://dnr.mo.gov/pubs/financial-assistance-brochure-2011.pdf).

### *For More Information*

Missouri Department of Natural Resources

Our Missouri Waters Initiative

PO Box 176, Jefferson City, MO 65101

573-751-3443 or 800-361-4827

Find us on the Web at [dnr.mo.gov/omwi.htm](http://dnr.mo.gov/omwi.htm)



*Big River near De Soto*



*Chariton County near Triplett*



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